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of the Insane.

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THE RELIGIOUS DELUSIONS OF THE INSANE.*

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Religion has to do with the relation between man and his Maker. To every individual it has an inward, hidden development, and an outward manifestation. It is a combination of precepts and actions, formulated beliefs and corresponding duties. It excites the highest hopes and stirs the deepest fears known to man. In its highest sense it is spiritual and exalting—the noblest aspiration of the human soul, the communion of mortal man with his immortal Creator, the homage of the weak and finite to the all-powerful and infinite. In its lowest sense it becomes dogma and ritual—an external manifestation without an in-dwelling spirit. Religious sentiments are innate, but their development depends upon age, natural characteristics, education, mental peculiarities, habits of thought and modes of expression. In childhood they are largely the result of education, and have an emotional rather than intellectual origin. Later in life, if the intellectual training of the individual is limited and his mind is not disciplined to thought or reflection, a similar emotional phase of religious feeling gives rise to ecstasies, raptures, fears, hallucinations of vision or hearing, and irrational conduct. In persons possessing mental training, religious sentiments have an intellectual origin, and the emotional nature being affected through the intellect is subsidiary to it and held in wholesome restraint. In proportion to the degree of mental discipline, religious sentiments become matters of the intellect as well as of the emotions. When symmetrically developed they have to do with the emotions, the intellect and the daily life alike.

The predominant characteristics of religious sentiments being hope and fear—a hope of eternal reward and a fear of lasting punishment—it is evident that when these sentiments are deranged there must be morbid hope and morbid fear. The insane man may, on the one hand, believe himself to be an exalted personage, under the patronage, protection and blessing of the Deity—possibly Deity itself—or, on the other, under the wrath of God, an outcast, a sinner, a blasphemer, and unfit to receive the slightest mercy.

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Between these extremes every phase of religious sentiment may exist. The asylums contain "Gods," "Saints," "Virgin Marys," "Mediators," "Kings of kings and Lords of lords," "The Lord's Vice-Gerents" without number, and an equally numerous throng of "Fiends," "Devils," "Lucifers," "Fallen Angels," "Dragons," and the like.

I will now proceed to consider more at length the delusions which are developed in different forms of mental disease.

1. *The Religious Delusions which accompany the Mental Development of Over-stimulated and Injudiciously Educated Children.*

These delusions are apt to take the form of morbid fear. The child being morbidly conscientious and impressible, and his reasoning powers imperfectly developed, his emotional nature is stirred unduly by vivid descriptions of the joys of heaven and the pains of future punishment. Realizing but little of the ethical side of religion, he confounds the emotional state which accompanies religious observances with religion itself. The moment he fails to derive pleasure and an emotional glow from prayer or praise he fancies that some duty has been neglected or improperly performed. Hence he becomes harassed by fears, tormented by doubts and overwhelmed by remorse for fancied misdeeds or sins of omission. The following case illustrates this type of disease:

"E. O., aged nine years; weight fifty-one pounds; was decidedly below the average in height, and possessed a neurotic temperament. He had been healthy and vigorous until six years of age, when he had a tedious illness, accompanied by a discharge from the right ear, and was afterwards delicate. Owing to ill-health he had not been allowed to go to school until eight years old, but his subsequent development had been precocious. He had applied himself diligently and had succeeded much better in his studies than other scholars of the same age. He had also attended Sunday school with painstaking fidelity, and had taxed his memory much to commit verses from the Bible. He had from infancy been morbidly conscientious and anxious to do right. Six months prior to his coming under observation it was noticed that when he attempted to say his prayers at night he was not sure he had spoken them correctly, and wished to repeat them again and again until they were 'perfect.' On some occasions he spent half the night on his knees, or until sleep overpowered him in this attitude of devotion. This condition under injudicious stimulation in

study, increased progressively during the following six months, until he became forgetful, absent-minded and the victim of imperative conceptions."

The predominant religious delusions in nervous children at this age are, as might be expected, when their half-starved and over-stimulated brains are considered, essentially those of fear and apprehension. The delusions of this class have much in common with the following, which will now be considered:

2. *The Religious Delusions characteristic of the Insanity of Pubescence.*

The characteristics of the Insanity of Pubescence are periods of stupidity, mental hebetude, listlessness, indifference and lack of power of application, alternating with periods of elation, restless excitement, uncontrollable impulses and moral perversions. During the period of mental hebetude there are great physical and mental depression, which in the religiously educated give rise to a fear of death and consequent eternal punishment, and engender a strong desire to do some religious act as a penance, or more probably, to purchase peace of mind and inward satisfaction. The boy or girl desires to join the church, or to go upon a mission, or to sacrifice some cherished luxury, and is seemingly absorbed in religious observances. The religious zeal, however, is short-lived and never lasts through the succeeding period of elation. Such persons, as a patient once said to me, in relating her own experience, "are converted every winter, but backslide during the summer." When depressed they are scrupulous of religious forms and ceremonial observances; when elated, all restraint is thrown to the winds. In the former state they derive much comfort from religious exercises; in the latter they are irreverent and often blasphemous. Unlike genuine cases of melancholia, their religious assiduity seems to bring relief and a degree of satisfaction. The condition under consideration is not so much one of actual delusion as of morbid feeling and vague apprehension. Such patients become observant of little matters, and attach great weight to the consequences of the neglect of a single religious duty. One school-girl, for example, neglected, as had been her wont, to pray prior to opening a letter from home, and when she tore it open, found, as she believed in consequence of her neglect, an announcement of the death of her mother. The feeling is not developed on account of general sinfulness and wholesale wrong-doing, as in melancholia, but it is rather excited by omissions to do minor acts

of religious worship, or whatever may have been prescribed by the minister or priest as the full measure of religious duty. There is little true introspection.

3. *The Religious Delusions of the Insanity of Masturbation.*

The delusions of the victims of self-abuse vary in character at different stages of the insanity of masturbation. At the outset, as might naturally be anticipated when the neurotic organization and age of the victims of this habit are taken into consideration, the phenomena of morbid fear predominate. To these are added a study of the Bible and a habit of introspection. The patient fears that he has committed the unpardonable sin, and suffers from remorse, gloom and mental distress. He redoubles his efforts to make amends for fancied wrong doing, and is scrupulous in all religious observances. As not unfrequently happens in similar morbid mental phenomena, sooner or later a transformation of the delusion occurs, and the person who has committed the unpardonable sin finds himself singularly forgiven, blest and holy. Delusions of religious superiority develop, and with other evidences of mental deterioration, a silly vanity in religious matters. The patient has visions, trances, hallucinations of hearing, raptures and ecstasies. The connection between self-abuse and religious delusions is probably to be ascribed to a combination of causes. At first religious delusions originate in a fear of deserved punishment for the violation of Nature's laws. To relieve this burden, consolation is sought in reading the scriptures and in religious exercises, and the morbid fervor thus engendered soon leads the patient to the opposite extreme. Eventually he believes himself highly moral and superior to his associates and surroundings. A second factor in producing it is a general nervous erethism or emotional susceptibility which may be considered the direct result of the vicious indulgence, and is developed at the expense of the higher faculties. The final factor is an actual weakening of the intellectual centres from exhaustion and premature mental decay. A process of transformation thus goes on from year to year until the intellectual centres are in practical abeyance, and the emotional nature assumes complete control. In the analysis of religious delusions it should not be forgotten that for their development a substratum of religious education must generally exist. When there has been no religious training in childhood and no religious bent given to a man's nature, the effect of self-abuse is not to develop it. (This however is not invariably true.)

In the latter case the effect is shown in hypochondriacal fancies, a silly vanity, a sickening egotism, etc. Many illustrative cases may be given of this form of religious delusions, but the annexed case must suffice.

The following case illustrates the effect of masturbation to produce religious delusions in an organization predisposed to mental disease. It is fortunately in an individual who possessed considerable ability to analyze and describe morbid mental states:

"G. B. H., aged 41, was single, without hereditary tendency to mental disease, a teacher, not a church member, but a believer in spiritualism, of a studious and retiring disposition, not addicted to alcoholics, tobacco or opium, a masturbator for many years, and a man who had never been successful in business. He had been aspiring and ambitious, but had lacked ability to bring himself into notice. In pursuit of his calling as a teacher of elocution he had wandered about the country. At the age of twenty-one he heard a voice saying to him, 'Come up higher,' which seemed to have been a distinct aural hallucination. This heavenly admonition subsequently gave him a strong desire to elevate the human race. Poverty humiliated his pride by making it necessary for him to dress shabbily and stint himself in his daily allowance of food to such a degree that his health suffered. Five years ago, while in the west, he was induced to investigate spiritualism, and afterwards believed himself a medium chosen by God to a special work in the elevation of the human race. Four months previous to his admission to the Eastern Michigan Asylum, in consequence of hardships, privations and probably excesses in masturbation, he had an attack of excitement and was treated at an asylum at Taunton, Mass., for about two weeks, when he became quiet and was able to be removed to his home in Michigan, where he maintained composure for several weeks, although obviously unnatural in manner. He suddenly however became 'the Medium of God,' and was much excited for several hours. He thought God directed all his thoughts and acts and would make him a great orator so that he might be the medium of spreading truth throughout the world. When admitted to the Eastern Michigan Asylum in October, 1885, he was free from special excitement, but vain and self-important in manner. He was proud of his voice and was disposed to practice singing in a discordant fashion, and had much to say of his divine mission. He was disposed to withdraw himself from the society of his associates to commune with his own thoughts. He also had tendencies to denude him-

self, but was ashamed when discovered nude and always had a plausible excuse for his conduct. After a month he wrote to a relative in reference to hallucinations of hearing and a fancy that he could converse with persons at a distance, and seemed to be making an honest effort to correct certain morbid impressions. In this direction his efforts were seconded by a brother, who in a long interview told him frankly of his delusions. For eight months thereafter he was quiet, self-controlled, able to participate in literary exercises and to give recitations and readings. He seemed free from delusions and was thought to be well enough to go away from the asylum. He complained however of headache after slight exertion, and an inability to concentrate his thoughts. He subsequently confessed that his mind was not free from religious delusions during any portion of this time, and that he had continued the habit of masturbation. During this period of quiet he wrote the following letter:

PONTIAC, August 19th, 1886.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

* * * * * I am hopeful of success afterwards as my trust is in God. Through all the years of my adverse life, previous to the last, I have trusted him in a dim, blind way, for doing one's duty as he sees it is putting faith in Deity. During the last year—a tithe of whose bitter experiences you know not—my trust was implicitly in God. One night at Onset, while lying awake, sleepless as usual and suffering, a voice that filled me with its vast impressiveness said, 'My child, tell your mother that out of pain shall come blessing; out of pain shall come blessing; out of pain shall come blessing.' That I will find it so I have no doubt. Through all the fiery trials of the past fifteen months which subjected me to so much reproach I trusted that great Voice. At any time I could have stopped and turned back had I not been constrained by a sense of duty to go on. In every fiery trial and in hours of darkest doubt has come that same voice saying, 'Trust in God,' 'Your triumph cometh,' and lesser voices would say, 'Be brave, be strong, be true.' Oh that calm, steady, 'Trust in God,' how it has rung silently through the consciousness of centuries! May we all follow it up the long path of years till it widens forever into the fields of joyous and sublime endeavor! * * * * *

I remain yours affectionately,

G.

Soon after he showed increased mental disturbance, and on one occasion tried to take liberties with female employes, under the direction of the 'Eternal Voice,' and thought he had frequent communications from the spirit world. During the following two or three months he had periods of severe mental disturbance coming on at midnight, during which he called loudly upon the 'infinite One.' On several of these occasions he attempted to

mutilate himself by tearing out his genitals in order that he might suffer pain for 'Jesus' sake.' During the daytime he was free from excitement and talked of his midnight experiences as the workings of a diseased mind. He confessed to an excessive indulgence in masturbation, under the impression that he was bringing himself thus into closer relations with the spirit world. He also had impulses to pray with his associates and to read his Bible diligently. In a letter he said that he had 'sought truth and love and happiness through Spiritualism instead of Christianity,' and had been deceived, and announces his conversion to a 'love of the Lord Jesus.' He added, 'the Lord Jesus actually speaks to me often, very often, and counsels me what to do, so great is my weakness and ignorance of the Bible and of the Christianity I have despised.' Soon after, impelled by an idea of self-sacrifice, he assaulted his attendant with the intention of bringing injury upon himself. After a period of great mental disturbance of several weeks' duration he suddenly cleared up and spoke intelligently and sorrowfully of his condition. He desired to be rid of the voices which he considered the causes of his attacks. These he explained were not audible voices, but thoughts which came into his mind in the shape of well-formed sentences which recurred again and again without any effort of his own, and in fact contrary to his volition. They warned against the errors of spiritualism, and urged him to deeds of self-denial for the cause of Christ. They even gave him explicit commands to do acts which were distasteful to him. At first he struggled against and overcame them temporarily by an effort of the will to devote his attention to other matters. Soon, however, he lost his ability to withstand them and eventually became enslaved. A short time after this conversation he again became wholly dominated by suicidal impulses. He refused food, endeavored to mutilate himself and recklessly exposed his life and health. For three nights in the depth of winter he denuded himself of clothing and was sleepless from bitter mental and physical agony. At the end of three months he came to himself and thus described his sad condition. He said the 'influence,' as he termed it, stole upon him imperceptibly. It came as a 'gentle, benign, fatherly voice,' and spoke persuasively and not commandingly. It came in the attitude of 'a loving all-wise father to an erring child.' Slowly he was forced to listen. As its influence deepened he felt called upon to make some form of self-sacrifice. At first a sacrifice was exacted in a quarter where he experienced the strongest desire. If by

previous fasting he had become ravenously hungry he was commanded to abstain from some article of food. The voice said, 'My child are you willing to reject this portion?' and he found himself unable to turn a deaf ear to the seductive tone. At first he was told that his bare willingness to abstain from food was sufficient, but soon actual abstinence was required, sometimes of some article of food, but more frequently of the entire meal. Afterwards his past life was unfolded to him with all of its errors, and he was asked if he were willing to make amends. He was informed also how he might avert certain anomalous sensations which he believed to be threatening epilepsy. Old faces came back to him with great distinctness. At one time the face of a former mistress, who had given birth to a child a few months after her marriage to another man, appeared to him. Her child might possibly have been his, and this possibility became a reality in his disordered mental state. The voice told him that this child had inherited epilepsy from him and died finally from this disease. He was commanded to expiate this sin by passing nights without sleep, denuded of clothing and in bodily torture from extreme cold. It is a curious circumstance that in his natural state of mind he had no actual faith in the existence of God, but was an agnostic. His delusions gradually disappeared, and at the end of four months he left the asylum on trial."

4. *The Religious Delusions of Paranoia.*

In paranoia we have a mental organization which is congenitally abnormal and predisposed to perverted action. In the great majority of cases there exists as early as puberty in both sexes a precocious sexual excitability which gives rise to an unnatural religious susceptibility and induces boys to plan to enter the ministry or to become priests, and girls to lead a life of devotion. Later in life the same persons become introspective and inclined to revery and day-dreams. As a rule they are inactive in their habits, disposed to read the Bible, to seclude themselves from society and to scrupulously observe religious ceremonies and services. They have a strong religious bias and are apt to embrace peculiar views or to be attracted by the latest novelty in religion. The immediate cause of the development of religious delusions is generally some physical ailment, an illness or a severe mental or physical shock. In rare instances they are the outcome of the delirium of fever; more generally, the result of physical or nervous exhaustion, and most frequently the sequence of excesses

in masturbation or sexual exhaustion. The development of the full formed disease is usually marked by sleeplessness, hallucinations of vision or hearing, strange bodily sensations or acute mental distress. One patient after praying for several nights in a corn-field in great agony of mind, felt the burden of sin fall from his aching shoulders and saw it glide away in the darkness, dark, sinister and, to use his own expression, "like a small woodchuck." Another recovering from typhoid fever had a vivid dream of heaven in which he saw himself seated upon the throne a recipient of divine homage. Ever after when fatigued or exhausted this grateful vision recurred to him until he finally had a fixed delusion that he was Christ. Another after a period of prayer, fasting and vague distress, at the age of 19 years, heard an audible voice conferring upon him the gift of prophecy. Such conditions of nervous tension, generally due to a physical cause, have been aptly termed by Krafft-Ebing "receptive stages" of paranoia, during which ideas and fancies are rapidly elaborated but imperfectly assimilated by the mind of the individual. The mental concepts in this stage may be likened to paintings in a picture gallery. They are mental images which do not seem to have any intimate connection with his own personality. He views them as a spectator simply, and feels interested in them in a general way. Like all other states of mental exaltation, this condition is not permanent but is sooner or later followed by ideas of persecution and great mental distress. The unfortunate patient who had enjoyed, a little time before, a vision of heavenly realities and "saw what it is not lawful for a man to utter," suddenly finds himself at the mercy of a wicked world, ruined in property and reputation, and the laughing-stock of his unfeeling associates who fail to appreciate his religious enthusiasm and care nothing for his aspirations. The stage of persecution thus inaugurated becomes a period of mental conflict, during which he is torn with doubt, overwhelmed with the taunts and threats of his friends and an object of persecution and derision. After a time the ideas and fancies which accompanied the receptive stage above described recur to his mind unbidden and offer a grateful contrast to the annoyances and persecutions of his daily life. Hallucinations of vision and hearing also help to confirm these pleasing impressions. He delights to dwell upon and derives consolation from them when alone, but the cup of happiness is repeatedly dashed from his lips by taunts and sneers of his vigilant persecutors. After days, months and sometimes years of alternate

agony and bliss, despair and blessedness, the apparent truth finally dawns upon him that he is persecuted because of some peculiar divine power, heavenly gift, or special religious calling. All is now revealed to him. His life of mental anguish and distress has been a preparation for his sacred ministry. He consults his Bible and finds references to himself in nearly every passage. He is the "Saviour," "Shiloh," "the Prince of Peace," etc., and is destined to receive honors and blessings far superior to any earthly king. Generally, even in women, a strong sexual irritation is connected with these extravagant religious delusions. He desires to marry to perpetuate a holy race or to become the father of a Pope or the founder of a Holy Priesthood, or if a woman, she fancies herself destined to give birth to a Saviour. The following illustrative case will serve as a type of many others:

"A. H., whose mother was insane and father eccentric and ill-balanced, at the age of 13 years displayed a precocious sexual sentiment and began to talk of matrimony. During the following ten years he offered himself in marriage to seven different persons, but for some reason was rejected by each one. At the age of 24 years he became unsettled in mind and devoted himself to erratic inventions and the study of the Bible. Believing that God had commissioned him to preach, he dressed himself in a fantastic suit of scarlet velvet and armed himself with a two-edged sword. Thus attired he preached and distributed tracts of his own composition, which were largely composed of scripture texts and his own incoherent comments upon them. He announced himself a prophet and 'the man on a white horse' spoken of in the Revelation, whose special mission was to convert and restore fallen women. With these extravagant delusions were mingled delusions of persecution. He believed himself defrauded of property and 'persecuted for righteousness sake.' He was finally arrested and lodged in jail because of frequent threats to kill a relative, and was brought from the jail to the asylum. He said that he had done no violence to any person and had been guilty of no unjustifiable threats. He acknowledged that he was eccentric, that he had worn a fantastic suit and carried a two-edged sword in order to attract attention, but that the latter paraphernalia were 'a powerful agency' and calculated to attract attention and 'do good.' He explained that he threatened his sister and her husband because they ill-treated his mother, and that he destroyed property and threw articles from the house because he desired to get possession of his own. He claimed to have broken no law, and

said that 'the joke had gone far enough.' He displayed many extravagant fancies. He knew more about the Bible than any other person, and through careful study was better qualified to teach the Scriptures than any divine. He spoke of the rottenness and hypocrisy of the church, and declared that several immoral women were church members at home. He declared that he had received much immoral solicitation and had witnessed lewd conduct on the part of several church members. When asked if his conduct was not calculated to cast doubts upon his sanity, he replied that martyrs in all ages had been persecuted for righteousness sake. He turned to the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis and read as follows: 'Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shalt be in the neck of thine enemies, thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey my son thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.' He claimed to be 'Shiloh,' and to prove it quoted from the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation: 'And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself, and he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, and with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.' He further said that his coming here was prophesied, and read from the twentieth verse of the second chapter of the Revelation to the close of the chapter. The adulterous woman referred to above he was shown in a vision by an angel of the Lord one year ago. He had offered himself in marriage to seven lewd women in succession without knowing their character, and had been rejected by each of them on account of his religious belief, but afterwards received a vision from the Lord which showed to him their true character. He also read numerous quotations from the Old Testament Prophets, which announced his coming and imputed to him supernatural powers and a divine mission.

During his stay in the asylum he was at first much distressed by the lack of opportunity to carry out his divine mission, and made many complaints. With the lapse of time he became interested in useful employment and also displayed a talent for drafting and mechanical work. He developed a fatal facility for falling in love, and wrote many tender epistles to many different persons, of which the following will serve as a sample:

Jer. 31: 22. A woman shall compass a man.

DARLING MARY:

I cannot take, No, for an answer. I know you love me and that is enough. * * Says God, 'Woe to them that take away the right of poor of my people,' Isaiah 10. My grandfather was an English Lord in Ireland and left a great estate, of which I am the only heir, of the Rothschild lineage. But I have something better still, talent and genius, which never fail to secure for its possessor a position. There is a crown hanging over your pretty head and you may wear it soon if you can venture to strive for it a little. 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' Isaiah 10: 8. Oh my lovely Angel Mary please promise me now and do not delay any longer, for I cannot rest day nor night for the excess of my passion of love, (your pretty hand,) Why not enter into that greatest of all earthly pleasures, matrimony? I have long wished to be a man among men and have a family of my own, but there was always something stood in my way, as you see does now. There is a cause for this. My children are to be a sign of God's blessing to Israel (Isaiah 8: 18.) and this is the depths of Satan to destroy the sign, that is to destroy the tree and its fruit. (Jer. 11: 19-23.) A great many clubs in a tree is a pretty good sign it bears good fruit. Hence my persecution."

5. *The Religious Delusions of Epilepsy, Dementia and General Paresis.*

Contrary to the general opinion which has obtained, the delusions which accompany Epilepsy are not generally of a religious character. It is true that confirmed epileptics are much inclined to religious observances, attendance upon church services, and Bible reading, but these acts are generally the result of a previous religious education and are continued from force of habit after the development of mental disease. There is never or rarely any sense of religious fear or feeling of unworthiness, but rather a sense of satisfaction in the performance of religious duties. The epileptic frequently in conversation praises his own devotion to religion, or commends himself for having read the Bible most diligently, but there is beyond this no deep-seated religious feeling. His religious talk is automatic and the result of previous training. The same is true of the religious characteristics of confirmed dementia. Sometimes there is a semblance of religious extravagance on the part of

a demented man, but generally it may be traced to a previous religious education. Occasionally also in the dementia which follows religious melancholia there is an abiding habitual sense of religious unworthiness and spiritual deadness. In general paresis, on the other hand, there may be extravagant delusions of religious importance which closely resemble those which are developed in acute or chronic mania, and are due to the rapid flow of ideas through the brain and are a part of the general cerebral excitement. They are usually evanescent and rarely become systematized or controlling after the excitement passes away. None of these forms seem to require any illustrative cases.

6. *The Religious Delusions of Melancholia and Climacteric Insanity.*

In considering the religious delusions of those who suffer from melancholia it should not be forgotten that the entire mental training of many persons is in a religious direction. Their minds are disciplined to reflect upon religious doctrines, and their acquired knowledge is largely about their relations to God and His dealings with them. Outside of these abstruse topics they have little abstract thought, study or even reading. Their mode of thinking and bent of mind become eminently religious, and they are largely occupied with doctrinal discussions and theoretical speculations as to sin, repentance, future punishment and future reward. Oftentimes their views of God's relations to them are crude and faulty, too often derived from a literal interpretation of Old Testament passages, or the study of the lives of biblical worthies, or the legends of middle-century saints. These erroneous views frequently originate painful delusions and suggest intellectual difficulties which would not have been developed had their original conceptions of religious duty been less faulty. Depressing religious delusions such as characterize melancholia develop more frequently among protestants than catholics. Among the former, too, delusions of distrust and unworthiness are more apt to be elaborated by processes of thought, and hence give rise to greater and more persistent mental distress than among the latter. The delusions of protestants usually relate to their exposure to divine wrath in consequence of a failure to perform some ethical duty. The delusions of catholics generally relate to the non-performance of a devotional act or penance or ceremony prescribed by the church. Among protestants religious delusions are generally based upon conceptions of God as a stern, unyielding ruler who

commands instant obedience in thought, word and act. Hence motives are inquired into and conscience is put upon the rack to discern short-comings in intention, failures in refraining from thoughts of evil, and other equally hidden misdeeds. The mind of such a protestant is, in consequence, constantly under a severe strain, and conscience holds it remorselessly up to an ideal standard of ethical duty, with little assistance from outside sources. Among catholics, on the other hand, absolution, confession and penance give support to the mind by showing that wrong-doing is not unpardonable and sin may be expiated. The melancholic religious delusions of protestants therefore are those of despair, and are frequently accompanied by intense mental distress and strong suicidal proclivities. Among catholics, melancholic delusions are more apt to take the form of fastings, penance, the adoration of relics, etc., and are less hopeless. Among the religiously educated or piously inclined, delusions of distrust and fear generally develop in consequence of causes of exhaustion, such as ill-health, defects of digestion, over-work, over-worry, grief, want, pregnancy, lactation and the climacteric. The last-named period of female life seems especially liable to awaken religious melancholic delusions. This epoch marks a period of life when certain organic forces and activities cease. There is a lowering of the vital tone and an interference with the spontaneity of vital processes. The mal-nutrition of the brain finds its expression in religious doubts, fears, mental distress and suicidal propensities. At this age depressing religious delusions are persistent, and give rise to intense and lasting mental distress. The sufferings of the religious melancholiac far exceed in intensity those of any other form of insanity. The paranoiac suffers, it is true, but he is comforted by the thought that he is wrongfully accused, and has a consciousness that he deserves benediction rather than reproach. The victim of melancholia, on the other hand, is doubly distressed by the feeling that he deserves it all and much more. The religious fear extends to motives, duties, privileges, present happiness, future misery—"every thought and intent of the heart" seem to unite to destroy the mental peace of the individual. The restlessness and religious despair which accompany atheromatous degeneration among the aged are similar in character and mode of development. Examples of religious melancholia are unfortunately so common as not to require any special illustrative cases.

7. *The Religious Delusions of Chronic Mania, Alcoholic or other Toxic Insanity.*

The religious delusions of chronic mania, alcoholic or toxic insanity are generally of an extravagant character, and relate to the possession of great power, personal importance and attributes which, if not divine, are certainly super-human. In the majority of cases the delusions seem but the crystallization of the feeling of extravagance which accompanied the period of maniacal excitement of alcoholic or opium intoxication. There is, however, this striking peculiarity in these delusions. They are not invariably developed in persons of a religious training or of a devotional habit of mind. In many instances these persons have been the reverse of religious, and have no conception of a devout attitude of mind. The melancholiac, like the publican of old, "standing afar off," turns his attention to religious duties, and humbly acknowledges his ill-desert. The chronic maniac or alcoholic case perceives no impropriety in arrogating to himself religious pretensions. In certain rare instances, when hallucinations of hearing are present, the delusion becomes a depressive one. Numerous illustrative examples may be given. A male patient thought he was Jesus Christ, and it was his duty to hold up his right hand. If it fell, he feared the whole world would be destroyed. He afterwards fell into a trance and thought he was the "Crucified Christ." He also called himself the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," "Heaven's New-born King," "God with us," etc. Another, thought he must expiate his sins and put himself in the attitude of Christ on the Cross. Another, thought he heard the voice of God distinctly command him to leave the asylum, to cross the ocean to India, to seek a mountain of gold which no one else had been able to discover. He had been commissioned by God to make its location known to the world. Later, he stood constantly in an attitude of prayer, because God had commanded him to give himself up for the sins of the world "to stop its wickedness." He asked to be shot through the temple, and declared it a sin against God to allow him to live. He had a tubercular disease of the testicle.

The Connection Between Vicious Indulgences and Religious Delusions.

The connection between sexual impulses and the development of religious delusions is not from any necessary association of ideas, but rather from the close association and inherent unity of

emotional states. Whenever the emotions are stirred by any event, joy and sorrow, love and hate, hope and fear, pleasure and pain, are found closely related. In the sphere of the emotions one emotion may be quickly followed by an associated or contrasted emotion, without any adequate cause or logical reason. This part of man's mind is like Pandora's box. If one emotion is set free, all the others escape. In certain states of nervous instability the human mind becomes the theatre of shifting, constantly changing and conflicting emotions which dominate the reason and coerce the conduct. They may be excited by sights, sounds, odors even, and muscular movements, events, abstract ideas, reminiscences, and in short by everything which is external to man, and in turn they also may give rise to trains of thought, mental conceptions, other emotions and voluntary or automatic acts. Emotional states predominate in the sexual and religious life of every individual. Religious and sexual sentiments have this in common. They are individual and personal, arising from organic causes which are mysterious and never to be fully understood, and leading to actions which are equally incomprehensible. Under the control of sexual impulses and religious emotions a man is revealed as he is in his inmost soul, without disguises or false appearances. Sexual impulses and religious sentiments have their origin and highest development alike in emotional states, even in a healthy mind. In states of disease arising from sexual abuse or sexual excess, a morbid religious feeling develops among the religiously educated as a part of a general nervous erethism. In these cases the religious delusions are the expression of a general state of emotional instability which had its origin in sexual emotions. No better evidence can be given of the truth of this statement than the combined sexual and religious sentiments of monks and nuns in the middle ages. Exhausted by penance and fasting, emotionally excited by constant dwelling upon religious topics and a life of asceticism and active devotion, it is little wonder that their adoration for the Virgin Mary or the Saviour was expressed in the language of earthly love. The same is also true of the earlier stages of insanity from alcoholic, opium or other narcotic indulgence. The quickening of the cerebral circulation and the hyper-nutrition of brain tissue give rise to delusions of religious extravagance. Later, however, when the nutrition of the body has become impaired by vicious indulgences and nerve and brain cells suffer from mal-nutrition, delusions of religious fear replace them.

The Course and Termination of Religious Delusions.

The religious delusions of over-stimulated children are generally relieved by rest, freedom from study and a judicious correction of the educational errors which produced them. In many instances, however, the tendency to a degree of dementia is not fully arrested, and the child grows up to manhood or womanhood with a prematurely weakened brain and a liability to subsequent attacks of insanity. The same is true in a great measure of the religious delusions which accompany the insanity of pubescence. They are not systematized, and soon pass away. The insanity of pubescence, however, is liable to become periodic or recurrent mania, with a vicious circle of depression and excitement, and it is interesting to note that the religious delusions are generally lost sight of when mental disease becomes fully and unmistakably established. The religious delusions which accompany the insanity of masturbation are not necessarily incurable. They are however liable to become persistent and are not readily amenable to treatment. They may be considered incurable whenever the patient has reached the stage of religious extravagance, which is surely indicative of mental deterioration. The religious delusions of paranoia are essentially incurable, being the legitimate development of a mental twist and the outgrowth of an abnormal personality. They eventually become thoroughly assimilated by the mind and an integral part of its constitution. During the stage of persecution they may at times pass from the mind, but after the stage of transformation they cannot. The religious delusions of epilepsy, general paresis, chronic mania, alcoholic and toxic insanity require little special mention. They are the *debris* of decay and the broken fragments of a hopeless mental wreck. The religious delusions of melancholia are more curable. They mark deep-seated disease, but the prognosis is not hopeless.

